

Visakhhi



BAISAKHI

The miracle was wrought,
God manifested Himself.

By :

*Sant Waryam Singh Ji,
Founder & Head*

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(Translated by : Prof. Beant Singh)*



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Even today, Indians take pride in India's pristine glory in the distant past about five thousand years ago. That was the age of Lord Krishna. At that time, great warriors, monarchs and kings ruled in India, among whom Duryodhana, Jarasindh and Sushpal deserve special mention. In that age, many weaknesses had crept into them. They were all sovereigns in their respective kingdoms. Dhritrashtra, Duryodhana's father, ruled the kingdom of Hastinapur by depriving the Pandavas of their legitimate rights, and the latter had to wage a great war, called the Mahabharata, in order to wrest their rights. Almost all Indian rulers participated in that war, and all extant weapons were used in fighting. This dreadful great war had horrible consequences, so much so that out of 45 lakh soldiers (which are also counted as 18 khuhnis - each khuhni comprising 21870 elephants, 21870 chariots, 65610 horses and 109350 foot soldiers) who took part in it, only ten persons survived. Alongwith Duryodhana, all his brothers and comrades were killed and from the Pandavas' side, only the five Pandava brothers and Lord Krishna could survive the fury of war. India suffered such a terrible setback that the Aryan pride, tradition, culture and temporal power were totally destroyed. Children were born according to Varna - Shanker practice (when the husband is dead, the woman gets a child from another man to continue the family), and thus population of the country started growing anew. Religious practices and beliefs became feeble. The extent of degradation was so much that even the Brahmins started shearing their hair. According to the prevailing custom, if a Brahmin had to be awarded death sentence, then, fearing Brahmo-cide (killing of a Brahmin), his hair was shorn. The Kshatriya kings guarded their

hair jealously and wore a gold crown over long unshorn hair. However, they kept their hair loose. The *rishis* and *munis* (sages) fully guarded their hair and beard, but generally they were bare-headed. As time passed, the sages started sporting matted hair.

The 'Duapar Age' (the third of the four ages in Hindu mythology) came to an end in this period of decline and degradation, and the 'Kalyuga' (age of darkness, last of the four ages in Hindu mythology) came to be ushered in. People's intellect or cognitive faculty was enfeebled and thus started the worship of idols of many unmanifest beings who were called gods and goddesses. Waheguru (God) was alienated from the world and was considered passive. In His place began the worship of three gods, who in the Jap Ji Sahib have been called "one the world's creator (Brahma), one steward who gives sustenance (Vishnu) and one who has the disposition of destroying (Shiva)." Being close to human beings, they helped them in time of need, destroyed the tyrants, and when happy with their devotees, showered religious and economic blessings on them and fulfilled their desires but they could not grant salvation. The achievement of salvation was kept within man's own actions. Waheguru (God) was shown above mundane activities, and no desire for a union with Him was born in the heart of man. Waheguru's super energy alone impelled the doings of the world through three characteristics of nature - *rajo* (passion), *tamo* (evil) and *sato* (virtue). Waheguru was inaccessible, desireless and impalpable and very far away from man. He was totally unconcerned about man's complex doings which fell within the domain of the deities. As man's needs grew, so did the number of chief deities, for example, Varun, the god of waters, Pavan, the god of winds, Kuber the god of wealth. God Inder was the king among them and in this manner started the worship of many gods. The relationship with the Timeless One became more and more thin and fragile and so were born a variety of rituals. Man was alienated from God and he was roped into the clutches of occult powers and evil spirits. As time passed, atheistic sects like Vaam Marg and Charwak (tantric modes of worship) came into being, the chief aim of which was taking drugs, eating meat and fish and indulgence in sex and other evil actions, and these assumed the form of religion for the people. In

comparison with Waheguru, the belief in the eternal character of nature became firmly grounded in man. The two eternal forces in the world, the Conscious Being and Nature came to be considered identical. The manifestations of nature assumed the form of 'maya' (illusion) and captivated man completely. People became oblivious of the Conscious Being (God). The Conscious Being came to be considered merely a mighty force under the influence of which Nature in its numerous shapes and colours filled the human mind. The Conscious Element was assumed to have three attributes which were called *sat* (being), *chit* (knowledge) and *anand* (bliss). These three attributes are strictly the Conscious Being's (God) His own. On the contrary, Nature has the attributes of *rajo* (passion), *tamo* (evil) and *sato* (virtue). The Conscious Being's energy activated nature, just as flint-stone activates iron ions. Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh remained greatly concerned with human beings in this world, and man always entertained hopes of getting all his desires granted by them. Instead of seeking union with Waheguru (God), man started considering the attainment of 'nirvana' (redemption; Buddhist term for *mukti*) through riddance from nature's three attributes as the highest state. This belief was not in the common man's interest because he needed that Prabhu (God) Who always abided with him, Who was present within him and without at every place, Who fully knew the joys and sorrows of His creatures and when invoked (supplanted) for help should Himself come to provide succour; that is, that power, besides having the attributes of *sat*, *chit* and *anand*, should be all-loving, and by striking a chord of harmony in the hearts of men should be fully acquainted with their weals and woes. The period of 4000 years before the Bhakti movement passed under these feeble beliefs.

In that period, Mahatma Buddha and Lord Mahavira, founders of Buddhism and Jainism respectively transcended the bounds of 'maya' (illusion) through their austere penances, and attained a state of 'nirvana' (emancipation). But according to the convictions of the Bhakti movement, Waheguru (God) loves his devotee, sustains him, rids him of sorrows and becomes wedded to him with the ties of love and transforms him into His own

image. It was not a state of desolation; it was a living and pulsating, love-drenched emancipated state to enjoy the ecstasy of God's love. It was during this Bhakti movement that the light of knowledge increased manifold and the human creature, through the devotional ladder, merged into *anant* (the infinite), *anaad* (eternal), and *anahat* (unstruck, the primordial 'Om'), and became God Himself. Atheistic sects exercised a great influence on India's rulers and its people. Nevertheless, during this long period, there were some kings of lofty noble character who dispensed justice to their subjects and their tales are a source of perennial inspiration.

Islam, having faith in one God, rose from Arabia and gradually exercised influence over the whole world. That religion was full of love and advocated fraternal feelings, mutual consideration, sense of service and love of one God. Its direct and simple teachings broke the webs woven by the fanatics and showed the path of love, which simply charmed the people, even though the succeeding generations of Muslim kings were extremely cruel and merciless and considered even the atrocities committed by them as virtuous actions. They had strayed from the lofty teachings of Islam and wanted to project themselves as righteous by putting on the garb of religion.

The period of Islamic rule in India, that is worth describing, is divided into several parts. From 1000 to 1526, the state of Punjab was that of a house (with its doors left half-open) hit by a tornado which caused a terrible upheaval throwing everything into chaos and disorder. The walls of the house collapsed under the impact of the storm, and it looked like a desolate ruin. This series of storms started with the Islamic invasions. The first among the invaders were Alpatgin and Subkatgin, who belonged to the ruling family of Afghanistan. They scattered India's power to the winds. Mahmood during his time (999-1030 AD) invaded India 17 times. Mostly Kanauj, Kalanjar and Ranthambor bore the brunt of these invasions. One of Mahmood's invasions was on the famous Somnath temple in Gujrat. The earliest capital of Hindu kings was Kabul. Then they moved their capital to Udbhand, from where they were pushed out to Nandana. At last they established

their capital at Sirhind and ruled from there. Indian rulers never fought the invaders unitedly, and therefore, individually suffered defeat after defeat. As the power of the Gazhnavis declined, their place was taken by the Gauris, who, instead of returning with the loot, established their foothold in India. Sahabudin established the first Turkish rule in the country. At this very time rose invaders like Genghiz Khan from central Asia. They spread like the stormy waves of the sea. Russia, Afghanistan, Iran and many other countries caved in like a house of cards before their mighty surge. While pursuing Jalal-ud-din, Genghiz Khan reached the bank of the river Attak. Tempted by India's wealth, they pillaged and ravaged the land for 300 years. In this period, the expeditions of Amir Taimur and Babar are of great significance. Taimur wrought such havoc and perpetrated such atrocities in India that one's hair stand on ends. In the course of this political upheaval Punjab had to suffer great torment. The Delhi king transformed Punjab into a military cantonment in order to confront the invaders. These troops caused a serious setback to Punjab's economy. The country at that point of time was divided into many parts. The Sultan's own rule was limited to Multan, while Dipalpur, Lahore, Jalandhar, Sirhind, Samana etc., were under independent governors. During this period, the Hindus were in a very sad state. Only men from the invading forces were appointed to all high offices. In Punjab, even those Hindus, who had embraced Islam, were denied high posts. Nevertheless, they enjoyed greater facilities than the Hindus. The Hindus were called *kafirs* (heathens) and idol-worshippers. The rulers had no sympathy with them, and they were considered second-grade citizens. During the Mughal rule, the Hindus did enjoy some special rights in administration, trade, commerce and agriculture on the strength of their abilities. No doubt the Hindu rulers during this period were not statues of clay, but on account of their poor economic condition, they could not maintain big armies. Raja Jaipal, though defeated at the hands of Mahmood Subkatgin, did not concede defeat. His successor, Raja Anand Pal forged an alliance of Rajputs, but without much success. His son Trilochan Pal established his capital at Sirhind. At that time, it appeared as if the Hindus were powerless and lifeless. Though Rajput kings ruled in the hills of Punjab, yet they never fought

against the Muslim rulers determinedly. In 1521 Babar invaded Punjab and completely destroyed Saidpur (Emanabad). Guru Nanak Sahib was a witness to this destruction and said:

“Having possessed Khurasan territory, Babar has terrified Hindustan. The Creator takes not the blame on Himself, and has sent the Mughal as Death’s angel.

So much beating was inflicted that people shrieked. Didst not you, O Babar, feel compassion for public (after you had conquered the country)? Thou, O Maker- God art the equal Master of all.

If a mighty man smites another mighty man, then the mind feels not anger. Pause.

If a powerful tiger (like Babar) falling on a herd (Indians), kills it, then its master is to be questioned.

The dogs (Babar’s army) have spoiled and laid waste the priceless country and no one will pay heed to them when they are dead. O Lord, Thou Thyself joinest and Thyself separatest, and lo ! this Thine greatness.

If someone gives himself a big name and revels to please himself in the eyes of the Lord, he is but a worm, for all the corn that he pecks. If the mortal remains dead of his ego while alive, then alone does he receive some thing, by repeating God’s Name, O Nanak. “

(Asa, First Guru, Guru Granth Sahib, P. 360)

Here Guru Sahib has likened Babar’s forces to a tiger, and the people of Punjab to a herd of cows. Referring to their mental degradation, he said : -

“The abode of modesty and piety is far from him (Brahmin).

Nanak, falsehood is fully filling him all.

With the sacrificial mark on the brow and on his waist the ochre-coloured loin-cloth,

In his hand he holds the knife, he is verily the world’s butcher. Wearing blue clothes, he becomes acceptable (in the eyes of Muslims). Taking bread from the Muslims, he worships Puranas.

He eats the he-goat killed by uttering the foreign words

(Muslim Kalima) but allows none to enter his cooking enclosure."

(Asa, First Guru, Guru Granth Sahib, P. 472)

The Hindus in India had lost their precious self-respect and just pride. They were thoroughly demoralised and groaning in misery. According to historians, this decline did not start all of a sudden. All the blame cannot be laid at the foreigners' door. In fact, this decline started during the time of King Harsh Vardhan. The rigorous caste system, lack of mutual co-operation, supremacy of blind faith and strict ritualism devised by the priestly class had enfeebled and debilitated India's population completely. Whatever little strength and self-respect was left in them was destroyed by the Muslim rulers. Such were the conditions during the time of Guru Nanak Sahib:

*"The dark-age is the scalpel, the kings are the butchers,
and righteousness has taken wings and flown.*

*In this no-moon night of falsehood, the moon of truth is
not seen to rise anywhere.*

In my search, I have become bewildered.

In darkness, I find no path.

By taking pride, the mortal bewails in pain.

*Says Nanak, by what means can the mortal be delivered
?"*

(Slok, First Guru, Guru Granth Sahib, P. 145)

There were several other reasons also for the invading bands to destroy and degrade the non-Muslim population. *Jazia* (a tax) was levied only on the Hindus. Armed forces had laid siege of village after village in Punjab, and there were no signs of their early freedom. None heard their plea for justice against loot and extortion. So the common masses thought that embracing Islam was in their interest. *Jazia* was levied on the Hindus on the ground that they should fund the expenditure incurred on protecting their lives. In such circumstances, there was large scale conversion of religion from Hinduism to Islam. The Hindus were not given any high official positions. The non-Muslim population here was considered very low and inferior. Almost all Rajputs in the West Punjab gave up Hinduism and embraced Islam. Qualities like just

pride, self-respect and self-confidence had almost disappeared in the native population. Major Hindu tribes, such as Siyal, Sarhang, Waliay, Bahliay, Bakan, Hakan, Khokhar, Dhudhi, Tiwaiay, Kharal, Maral, Bhati etc., had collectively changed over to Islam.

Kings like Allauddin demolished Hindu temples and broke idols. Broken idols were made weights of measure and given to the shopkeepers for weighing food-grain etc. The Hindus were forbidden to wear good dresses and ride good mounts. Separate taxes were levied for undertaking pilgrimages. The Sidhs (divines) and yogis, the spiritual leaders of that time, renounced their homes and hearths, went to the mountain tops or to the temples and moved about in groups of Sadhus (holymen) who made and kept fires to practice austerities. These bands did not engage themselves in any work for their livelihood; rather they were a big burden on the people. Criticising their traditional practice and way of life, Guru Nanak Sahib says :

*“Yoga is not in the patched coat, nor is Yoga in staff, nor is Yoga in smearing the body with ashes;
Yoga consists not in ear-rings, nor in shaven head, nor is Yoga even in the blowing of horn. Abide pure amidst the worldly impurities. Thus shalt thou find the way to Yoga.”*
(First Guru, Sri Guru Granth Sahib, P. 730)

In this sorry state, the Hindu society was ridden by many divisive forces, such as caste system, high and low and untouchability. Instead of living in God’s Will, people visited the yogis (ascetics), and the sorcerers. They asked them about good and bad omens and hoped for joy through witchcraft. It appeared as if the vast body of the Hindu society was suffering from countless maladies and the life-blood in its veins was flowing haltingly. In a way, this society lay virtually prostrate on the earth and no will to rise and struggle ever rose in the people. The sense of self-respect was totally destroyed. Ishwar (God) who could help the people, had been vivisected (divided) into gods and goddesses. They made idols of these gods and goddesses and sought help from them for their welfare. The darkness of ignorance had enveloped them completely. In comparison, the Islam firmly believed in only one God. The Muslims considered Hazrat

Mohammed Sahib only a prophet and messenger of Allah (God). Their religious beliefs were on a firm footing. On the other hand, the Hindu beliefs were shaky, insecure and powerless. During this period, as a result of the Islamic beliefs' total allegiance to Allah (God), many Sufi pirs (Muslim holymen) appeared on the stage of the world, whose tales naturally charm and fascinate us even today. Sufi Saint Sheikh Farid's attaining to the high position of the Satguru (True Teacher or Preceptor) with the inclusion of his verses in Sri Guru Granth Sahib was due to his firm belief in Allah (God). These pirs (saints) through their teachings converted many Hindus to Islam. Painting a picture of the contemporary Hindu society, historians have stated that it (Hindu society) had totally sunk into degradation. They have also stated that this decline started with that period of King Harsh Vardhan's reign when the Brahmins led the society and ritualism and untouchability were in a predominant position. The Brahmins laid great stress on ritualism as a result of which all the energy of the people of India, Deccan and East India in particular, came to be frittered away on intellectually meaningless and absurd customs and superstitions. Those who introduced ritualism did so for their own selfish interests; that is, the Brahmins wanted to perpetuate their leadership of the society. In such a time, naturally people's intellect became feeble. Lacking vigour, it began to rust. Whatever little strength was left in it was destroyed by rigorous social customs; so much so, that people consulted astrologers in matters of food, dress, sowing and reaping crops, and deciding dates of marriages. There was discrimination between high and low castes. Concern for the country's progress and defence was totally destroyed. While arranging marriages, matrimonial alliance with a totally unknown family was considered better than with an acquainted one. Man had full freedom to keep more than one wife. He could marry a number of women in the normal course. But woman was under a strict obligation to marry only one man. She was not permitted even to praise a man other than her husband. 'Sati' (burning oneself alive at the funeral pyre of one's husband) was a common practice. When the husband died, the wife had to immolate herself at her husband's funeral pyre. The widow's plight used to be very miserable. She spent her life in utter misery.

Describing such an incident of that time, Ibn Batuta writes:

“I saw a ‘sati’. For three days, she was treated royally. Numerous women came to see her. Then she was adorned and scented. While being led to the funeral pyre to the beat of drums, she was asked by ignorant people to convey their message of greetings to their dead kith and kin and comrades. She assured them that she would. I was terribly amazed at the absurd belief of the heathens. I accompanied this procession. When it reached the platforms, three women dismounted their horses and jumped into a water tank. They removed their clothes and ornaments and gave them in charity. Then each one of them wrapped an unstitched thick cloth round her waist. In the meanwhile, fire was lit in a pit beside the tank and sesame oil was sprinkled on it to set it ablaze. Fifteen persons stood with logs of firewood in their hands and ten others, with long poles. The three women offered salutation to the fire. At that very moment, there was a loud blowing of bugles, and beating of drums and the women jumped into the blazing fire. Immediately thereafter, heavy firewood was thrown on them and the men with the poles pressed them down so that they might not be able to move. At this harrowing sight, I would have fainted and fallen from my horse, had not my companions sprinkled water on me which revived me. Self-immolation of women in this manner became the cause of their self-mortification and their fidelity to husband was highly commended.”

Similarly, there was the practice of ‘Jauhar’ (a self-sacrificing ceremony by women folk of Rajput warriors in the medieval times). In this ceremony, a big fire was lit and women jumped into it and burnt themselves to death. Girls were married off at a tender age. Untold riches were offered in the temples. Mahmood, while describing the amounts of his loots, has stated at one place that once he looted 70,000 maunds (a unit equal to 82.28 pounds) of gold and silver from a single temple. When such were the conditions prevailing in the country, Guru Nanak Sahib undertook his ‘udasis’ (long travels) all over the world for the salvation of suffering humanity and preached his message of one-ness of God (Advait) (Who manifests Himself in numerous forms) at famous

'maths' (monasteries), Muslim hermitages, holy places, mosques, temples etc. The conditions of those times were so deplorable and despicable that they cannot be described. According to Lala Daulat Rai, in his 'Life story of Sri Guru Gobind Singh', "Thousands of men and women were beheaded daily with the rising of the sun. There was much blood-shed and countless men and women were made slaves. They were deprived of their homes. The situation had come to such a sad pass that sometimes they were obliged to offer their beautiful daughters and handsome sons as gifts to the rulers. The Hindus were forbidden to ride a horse. They could not tie white turban and were obliged to sport only red turban. If the Muslim rulers happened to take fancy to a Hindu's orchard, home and goods, they acquired them forcibly. Beautiful Hindu girls and women were taken away by force and married. If they saw a good book of Hindus, it was burnt to ashes. Temples and Shivalas (temples dedicated to Lord Shiva) were being converted into mosques. The Hindus were often sentenced to death if they refused to change their faith and embrace Islam. If there was a good 'hakeem' (physician practising Unani system of medicine), he was converted to Islam. A Brahmin was a great scholar and player of chess. When he defeated the 'nawab' (a highranking feudal title; governor) the latter ordered that the Brahmin should be converted to Islam. If in a wrestling match between a Hindu and Muslim, the former happened to win, he too was converted to Islam."

In such a state, Guru Nanak Sahib emanated the light of truth and dispelled darkness and ignorance from the world. Suffering many physical tortures, the Fifth Guru made the supreme sacrifice and taught the world to remain fearless and dauntless in the face of tyranny. At Delhi, Guru Tegh Bahadur sacrificed his life in defence of human freedom and 'tilak' (mark made on forehead as a mark of caste) and 'janju' (sacred thread worn by upper caste Hindus as mark of initiation). The Tenth Guru, seeing the sinking state of Hindu society for the last seven or eight hundred years, talked of human rights and took many steps to rid the people of numerous failings that had crept into them. He had to fight many battles against the Hindu Rajas (rulers) who were

the followers of the Mughals, but it was always truth that triumphed and they (the Hindu rulers) were defeated. The pressing need of the hour was to organize such an everlasting order of men who should have all the attributes of saints, who should see the light of one Waheguru (God) shining through all creation, who should seek to remove all the sorrows of the world and whose goal should be :-

“He within whose mind is the True Name, who with his mouth utters the True Name and who beholds no other but the unique Lord,

Nanak, these are the qualities of the man who knows God.”

(Fifth Guru, Sri Guru Granth Sahib, Sukhmani P. 272)

He should fully know the ecstasy resulting from self-realization and being the worshipper of the Enlightened One, he should be completely disinterested in ritualism, superstitions, austerities, visiting places of pilgrimage, memorials built at the sites of cremation and cremation grounds and should be the worshipper of one Light (God) that moves every where as -

“There is only one Light that shines in the whole universe.

Neither is it less, nor more, nor does it increase or decrease.”

(Akal Ustat)

Such an ideal should be brought into the world that, getting embodied in every human being, may spread the light of happiness (felicity) and knowledge. He should be kind, forgiving, forbearing, non-violent, contented, modest, given to service and charity, sweet-tongued, far-sighted, seeking partnership with all, capable of removing injustice, sharing his wealth or produce with others, doing honest labour and always lost in meditating on God. His conduct in the world should be one of non-attachment or renunciation. His chief occupation should be loving worship of God and his faith should be born out of complete knowledge. This ideal Order of men should neither cause suffering to any one, nor should it let anyone persecute others. A man of this Order should be absolutely fearless. While doing noble deeds, he should neither fear, nor

frighten others. Darkness of ignorance should have disappeared from his mind. He should be capable of seeing the whole world as a manifestation of God. He should be physically healthy. He should not renounce the world out of sorrow and frustration. He should accept God's Will and go through joys and sorrows of the world stoically. He should be everready to remove the sufferings of the people. He should be always trying to remove social evils. He should respect all religions of the world. It was thought very essential to create such a pure man (Khalsa). With this goal in mind, the Baisakhi of 1699 was chosen. This day of Baisakhi is of great significance in Sikh history. It was on a Baisakhi day that Guru Nanak Sahib started his travels for the emancipation of mankind. Again, it was on a Baisakhi that the digging for the *baoli* (a well with steps leading down to water level) at Goindwal Sahib was undertaken, and water too was filled in it on a Baisakhi. Guru Harkrishan Sahib also passed away on a Baisakhi and the Tenth Guru chose the Baisakhi of 1699 to create 'Khalsa' (the super man). On that day, addressing a mammoth gathering, Guru Sahib, holding a glistening sword in his hand, said in a stentorian voice: "For the sacrificial fire (yagya) of India's freedom, I need the head of a beloved Sikh of mine. He should come to me and offer his head." Bhai Daya Ram, a resident of Lahore, who was always lost in his love for the Tenth Guru, approached him and offered his head. He submitted : "True king! I have nothing that I can call my own. My body, my mind, my intellect and my ego are mine only in name. But by having already offered all these at your hallowed feet, I have merged my being in thine. Kindly accept it as your sacred trust and use it as you will."

*"Kabir, nothing is mine within me.
Whatever there is, that is Thine, O Lord.
If I surrender unto Thee, what is Thine,
What does it cost me?"*

(Sri Guru Granth Sahib, P. 1375)

Guru Sahib held him by the hand and severed his head from the body. Another head was demanded in the same stentorian voice. This time Bhai Dharam Chand presented himself before the

Guru and submitted:

*"Kabir, I long to die, but, when I die, then,
Let it be at the Lord's door.
May not the Lord ask, 'Who is this man
Lying at my door?'"*

(Sri Guru Granth Sahib, P. 1367)

" I am nothing, everything is thine, O Lord."

(Sri Guru Granth Sahib, P. 827)

"Kindly accept it as your sacred trust with me, said Bhai Dharam Chand." On the third occasion, Himmatt Chand, on the fourth, Mohkam Chand, and on the fifth, Sahib Chand, came into the presence of Guru Sahib. After having accepted five heads, Guru Sahib did not ask for the sixth. He was immensely delighted, and addressing the congregation, said, "During the time of Guru Nanak Sahib, only Bhai Lehna passed the test of Sikhism and emerged as Guru Angad Dev Sahib. But during the present terribly trying time, five beloved Sikhs have passed the test."

Different versions have been given about this momentous event in books of history. The version to which we subscribe is that Guru Sahib beheaded the five Sikhs in full view of the congregation and then made them alive again. There is no difference between the Guru and Waheguru (God). There are numerous instances in Sikh history when the dead were brought back to life, for example, Baba Atal Rai, Baba Gurditta, Bhai Jiwan etc. put life into the dead. In the last year's Baisakhi issue of 'Atam Marg', it has been described in detail. Those who are keen to know may read that issue of the magazine and remove their doubts.

The Tenth Guru joined the heads of the five Gursikhs with their torsos with his own blessed hands, and on hearing his command they got up and paid obeisance to him. Guru Sahib prepared the baptismal nectar (amrit) with his two-edged sword (khanda) and made the five Beloved Ones partake of it with his own hands, gifted them with the 'mool mantra' (opening verses of Japji Sahib) and 'Gurmantra' (initiatory shabad) He also revealed to them all the secrets of reaching the 'Dasam Dwar' [the tenth

door - beyond the nine openings in the human body; the mystical orifice in 'hatha yoga'] through reflection on the 'Shabad'. By bestowing on them the treasure of 'Brahmgyan' (knowledge of Brahma - the Creator), the Guru transformed them from men into God, as the Guru's edict is :

*"The great god, Shiva, searches for
the man who knows God.*

Nanak, the Brahmgyani is Himself the Exalted Lord."
(Fifth Guru, Guru Granth Sahib, P. 273)

*"God and His devotee are one and the same; there is no
difference between the two. The devotee merges in God,
as a wave arising from water merges in it."*

(Bachitra Natak)

*"There is no difference between the saint and the
Infinite."*

(Guru Granth Sahib, P. 486)

Thus Guru Sahib made Bhai Daya Chand, a Kashatriya from Lahore, Bhai Daya Singh, and Bhai Dharam Chand, a Jat from Delhi, Bhai Dharam Singh. Bhai Himmat Chand, who had come from Jaganath Puri in Orissa, a thousand miles away, was made Bhai Himmat Singh; Bhai Mokham Chand, who had come from Kathiawar in Gujrat, 1100 miles away, was made Bhai Mohkam Singh, and Bhai Sahib Chand, of Mysore, who too had travelled a thousand miles to reach Anandpur Sahib, was made Bhai Sahib Singh and merging them all in his own self commanded that they were his image:

*"The Khalsa is fashioned in my own characteristic image.
In the Khalsa do I abide."* (Sarab Loh Granth)

Thereafter, the Guru himself asked for the gift of 'amrit' (baptismal nectar) and from Gobind Rai he emerged into Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji. The secret of why, after having offered 'amrit' to the five Beloved Ones, the Guru himself requested for 'amrit' and partook of it, is known to Guru Sahib himself. We cannot say anything about it. He was all powerful, as he was the chief protagonist of this act of 'Bachitra Natak' (Wonderful Drama). Bhai Gurdas Singh describes this incident as follows :

*"At a congregation of the truthful,
the True Lord set up his throne.*

*Nanak, who was fearless and invisible God himself,
sporting in the company of the divines.*

*The Guru contemplated on 'Kalka' (Timeless God), for
time it was to wield the 'khanda' [two edged-sword, one
for destroying human failings of kaam (sexual appetite),
krodh (anger), lobh (greed), moh (attachment) and
ahankar (haughtiness), and the other to destroy the
wicked].*

*'Partake of pahul (baptismal nectar) prepared with the
two-edged sword to make life worthwhile', said he.*

*The Guru transformed the 'sangar' (congregation) into
Khalsa putting the egoists (mind-wards) in a dilemma.*

All glory to Gobind Singh, both Guru and disciple."

(Vaar 41/1 Bhai Gurdas Singh)

Then Guru Sahib said that from that day onwards, by becoming the Khalsa, they had merged into his being, and he was in them and they were in him, and they should recite Gurbani. Thereafter, the Guru instructed them about their conduct and behaviour:

*"Rehat (the Sikh code of conduct) is dear to me, and
not the Sikh." (Rehatnama, Bhai Desa
Singh)*

"One who follows 'rehat' is my Sikh.

He is my master, and I, his disciple.

One who does not follow 'rehat'

cannot be called a Sikh.

One who does not abide by 'rehat'

is turned from door to door.

One who does not follow 'rehat'

can never find joy and peace.

Therefore, a Sikh should strictly abide by 'rehat'."

(Rehatnama, Bhai Desa Singh Ji)

The Guru further said: ' I left my utterly blissful state of God's worship and assumed a physical form in order to propagate

and perpetuate the ideal of the Khalsa in the world. Today I have transformed you into my image to disseminate this ideal for universal happiness and to dispense the gift of perfect knowledge (of God) in the world. Like the perfect Satguru (True Preceptor) you have the capacity to bestow the gifts of Divine Name (Naam) and knowledge upon the people.’ The edict that he issued then was:

*"The Khalsa is my dear family.
Through the Khalsa am I liberated.
The Khalsa is my body and soul.
The Khalsa is the life of my life.
My honour and importance lie rightly in the Khalsa.
The Khalsa is my only goal.
The Khalsa abides with me always.
My physical form and breath are in the Khalsa.
The Khalsa is my duty and action.
The Khalsa holds the secret of my innermost being.
The Khalsa is my perfect Satguru.
The Khalsa is the gentleman soldier.
The Khalsa is my knowledge and wisdom.
Of the Khalsa do I always think.
The Khalsa's glory is beyond words.
One tongue of mine cannot fully describe the Khalsa.
The description of the Khalsa defies my intelligence.
There is not an iota of untruth in what I have stated.
Parbrahm (God), Guru Nanak is my witness."*

(Sarab Loh Granth)

On that occasion, the Guru also commanded the Sikhs not to worship anyone except 'Akal Purkh' :

*"Day and night shall the Khalsa contemplate
on the Living Light (God).
He shall worship only one God and none else,
In whom he shall have perfect love and confidence."*

Not even by mistake shall he visit graves, cremation places and monasteries for worship. He shall not visit places of pilgrimage, give alms ritually and suffer austerities. None but one God shall he recognise. When the Perfect Light abides in him,

he shall become the purest of the pure. In this way, the Guru gave to the world a new ideal in the form of the Khalsa for affording perennial joy to the people. This Khalsa is free from sham and superstition. Being distinct from the rest of the world, Guru Sahib has fashioned him in his perfect image and filled him with his perfect spiritual strength (soul power). He has also declared that so long as the Khalsa remains true to the ideal, he (the Guru) will continue to bestow on him all his effulgence (glory). When he falls a prey to shams and illusions and loses his distinctness from superstitions and fallacies, and reverting to ritualism, develops a narrow outlook of high and low, gets enmeshed in the shackles of caste system, and falling from his ideal, renounces it for his selfish interests, then he (The Guru) shall deprive him of all his glory and splendour:

*“The Khalsa is God’s own army.
The Khalsa has emerged as a result of God’s Will.
So long as the Khalsa maintains his distinctness,
I shall grant him all my glory.
When he strays and treads another path,
He shall lose all my confidence.”*

(Sarab Loh Granth)

Addressing the congregation on that historic occasion, Guru Sahib said: ‘Guru Khalsa Ji ! The Khalsa’s status is eminent because, renouncing his ego, he has fully merged into the Guru. He will go about in the world enjoying spiritual ecstasy. He will enjoy the status of Waheguru (God) and Guru (preceptor).

*“The true Khalsa is one who experiences
the ecstasy of self-realisation.
There is no difference between God, I and him.”*

(Sarab Loh Granth)

With the creation of the Khalsa (superman) on this day of Baisakhi, the dark chapter in the history of India was ended. On this day, after thousands of years, a complete man emerged on the stage of the world who was honoured with the name of the Khalsa. On this day, a complete or perfect man was created. Before the emergence of the Khalsa, man was divided into five parts. He could not be called a complete man because the task

of instruction was in the hands of the Brahmin. The Brahmin's job was to give alms or accept alms; to perform yagyas and get them performed; to learn scriptures and to teach them. These six tasks were entrusted to him. The Kshatriya's duty was to remain healthy and strong, to acquire spiritual weapons on the strength of his meditations and penances which used to be very powerful, such as 'bajar astar' (weapon that could turn one into stone), Inder astar (weapon of rain god Inder), Brahma astar, (weapon bestowed by Brahma, the Creator), agan astar (weapon of fire god), 'varun astar' (weapon of wind god) and many others. These weapons used to be acquired through the chanting of 'mantras' (chants) and had miraculous powers. Like the atom bombs of today, a single weapon could kill ten thousand men in one blow. A single weapon could shoot thousands of arrows to kill as many persons. This ancient Indian science disappeared gradually, and its place has been taken by modern science which has invented countless bombs, missiles and weapons to cause havoc in the battle-field. The Kshatriya used to be the land-owner, and lower sections of society tilled his land and gave him a part of the produce in a fixed ratio. His sacred duty was to lay down his life while defending his kingdom and country. It was believed that he attained heaven when he became a martyr in the battle-field. Similarly, the Vaish caste comprised workers. They reared cattle, did trade and commerce and visited places in and outside the country to sell the goods produced by them. They earned wealth and filled the king's coffers by paying taxes. The Kshatriya was given a fixed part of the land produce, and the Brahmin, being holy, was given alms. As a result, the Brahmins were not obliged to do any physical work. Their job used to be learning themselves and imparting education and to produce literature for the good of the society. But gradually, the Brahmin devised a network of rituals and caught the society in the grip of his rigorous rules and principles and weakened the other sections. These sections took every new direction and guidance from the Brahmins, even in matters like sowing and reaping crops, starting business, constructing the house, going on a journey, fixing dates of marriages and the relationship between husband and wife, buying new clothes and cattle and putting one's child in a school. In short,

the Brahmin's guidance was sought before undertaking any new venture. He also advised the people about good and bad omens, auspicious dates and days of the week, months and seasons after examining the movement of the planets. Even the breathing of a person was observed, as to from which nostril he was breathing before starting any business.

The Sudras' duty was to work for the other three sections of society like a servant. Their job was only to serve the superior castes, in return for which they were given a part of income earned by the high castes from their land and business. Man was divided to such an extent that among the Sudras there was a section whose touch was not defiling or contaminating. Another section was of those whose touch was polluting. If one happened to come across them in the morning before starting the day's work, it was a matter of great concern and anxiety. They were forbidden God's worship, recitation of scriptures and visiting temples and monasteries. If by chance, a Sudra happened to utter the word 'Onkar' (the formless God), his tongue was severed. If anyone of them talked of 'Brahmgyan' (knowledge of Brahma the creator), he was killed by the king himself, as was sage Sumbak got killed, by the Brahmins at the hands of Sri Ram Chander ji. Following the state laws, Sri Ram Chander ji killed sage Sumbak with his own hands. The man belonging to this untouchable class was considered the most despicable and dirty section of society. This class was kept illiterate. No educational institution or vocational school admitted them. This belief was preached that they were Sudras as a punishment for their evil deeds in their past lives and because they were all souls that had failed to find acceptance with God and had been spurned from His threshold. At the end of 'Duapar Yuga' (the third of the four ages in Hindu mythology) Balmik (chandal - an untouchable) attained the highest state of spirituality through his worship and meditation. He was a great sage. Lord Krishna made him appear at the time of Pandava's yagya, and washed his feet and picked up his contaminated leaf plates with his own hands. With his participation in the yagya, the sacred bell kept ringing loudly and the yagya was successfully consummated.

Guru Nanak Sahib totally rejected the caste-system. The Brahmin who contemplated 'Brahma' (the creator) was called a superior Brahmin. The teaching of that pandit who realised God within himself was accepted. A Khatri was one who was brave in deeds. While honouring the so-called low castes, Guru Nanak Sahib says:

“Nanak seeks the company of those who are of low caste among the lowly, nay, rather the lowest of the low. Why should he (he has no desire to) rival the lofty?”

(Sri Guru Granth Sahib, P. 15)

A householder was admired and honest labour was considered most sacred:

“He alone is the householder, who checks his passions and begs from the Lord meditation, hard toil and self-restraint. He, who with his body, gives in charity and alms all he can;

That householder is pure like the Ganges water.”

(Sri Guru Granth Sahib, P. 972)

The illusion of caste system was totally dispelled from the mind of man. Sikhism took such a revolutionary step that all human beings, irrespective of their religion, caste, high and low position, riches and poverty, were seated in one row and served food. Partaking of food in this manner was considered a mark of purity and holiness. Great emperors like Akbar and other rich men took food by sitting in a row before going into the Guru's presence. Similarly, by removing the suffocating burden of rituals and ceremonies, loosening the hold of astrologers and planets, false notions about months, seasons and auspicious times, Guru Nanak Sahib enlightened the people by his holy edicts:

“The months, days and moments are auspicious for those on whom the Lord casts his merciful glance. Nanak asks for the boon of Thine sight, O God ! shower Thine benediction on him.”

(Sri Guru Granth Sahib, P. 136)

“Throughout all the months, seasons, ‘gharies’ and ‘murats’ I meditate on Thee, O Lord!

By calculation, none has obtained Thee, O True, unseen

and unlimitable Lord !”

(Ghari - 24 minutes; Murat - 48 minutes)

(Sri Guru Granth Sahib, P. 140)

As regards their holiness, the fifth Guru declared:

“Nanak, beautiful is the day, when the Lord comes into the mind. But accursed is the day and season, however pleasant, when the supreme Lord is forgotten.”

(Sri Guru Granth Sahib, P. 318)

The Tenth Guru fully revealed man's humanity, and transforming him into Khalsa imbued him with the ideals of Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaish, Sudra and saints and sages. The Gursikh, playing the Brahmin's role, reads Gurbani himself and urges others to read it, and runs the kitchen. By organizing true congregations, he runs the highest kind of kitchen from where he dispenses 'shabad' (God's word) among them. By engaging in honest labour, he donates tithe (a tenth part of his earnings) in the name of the Guru, and having received this donation, he uses it for public welfare by setting up temples, hospitals, schools, colleges and rest houses, and building roads, bridges etc. When a calamity befalls the people, he uses the money received in charity to provide instant succour to the needy.

As a Kshatriya, he never allows oppression of the poor. He struggles for his rights from the ruler. He does not permit the enemy to cast an evil glance on his country. For the achievement of these goals, he smilingly sacrifices his life out of love and devotion for the Guru. He is a powerful defender and sentinel of the country's borders. He helps the poor and the helpless. He is a sympathetic friend of the orphans, the destitute, the lowly, the homeless and the unemployed. He considers it the will of the Guru to lay down his life for protecting women and helping the poor. He always carries his weapons with him because he considers them an integral part of his faith.

As a Vaish, he visits places both at home and abroad for trade, commerce and employment. While on one hand, he earns wealth, on the other, as a preacher he spreads the message of Sikhism, acquaints the people with Sikh teachings and principles

and advises them to shun superstitions and religious fallacies. He does farming, runs industries, conducts trade and commerce and serves society by becoming doctor, scientist, judge, minister etc.

As a Sudra, he considers service the holiest of actions because he firmly believes that -

“ In this world perform Lord’s service. Then shalt thou get a seat in Master’s court, and swing thy arm (happily), says Nanak.”

(Sri Guru Granth Sahib, P. 26)

and -

“He, who performs Guru’s service without desire for reward, attains to the Lord.”

(Sri Guru Granth Sahib, P. 286)

Thus by adopting this noble ideal of service, he raises this great honest labour far above the reading and recitation of the Vedas by the Brahmin. The Tenth Guru merged all these four castes in the physical being of the Khalsa, and above all, by making him a great man of action, lifted him far above saints and sages, Muslim holymen and recluses. Even though he is a householder, yet he is a perfect Brahma yogi (having knowledge of Brahma - the creator), a yogi (an ascetic, practitioner of yoga), a great sage and totally unattached to material riches. He experiences Waheguru (God) who manifests Himself every where and in every being. Thus the Tenth Guru filled the attributes of all the castes in one human being, and bestowing on him the status of the Guru, declared:

“The Khalsa is my religion and deed.

The Khalsa is my perfert Satguru.

The Khalsa is my gentleman warrior.”

(Sarab Loh Granth)

Guru Sahib made the Khalsa Waheguru’s and the Guru’s equal; that is, made him identical with the Timeless One (God). Thus after undergoing untold sufferings, this ‘ideal man’ was created in the world. To transform an ordinary man into a perfect man was indeed a great miracle. On the strength of his meditations, austerities and yogic exercises, an exceptional man

could perform small miracles such as - flying in the air, remaining alive under water, filling a pond with precious stones and pearls like the Sidhs (divines) changing sand particles into gold, transforming pebbles into philosopher's stone (a stone having alchemic property of changing baser metals into precious metals), riding tigers, wielding snakes as whips, increasing or decreasing one's size etc. But it was indeed a miracle to fill the hearts of feeble men with God's Name and on its strength raise them so high that they became indistinguishable from God, and in fact became His equal. Miracle of miracles it was to transform a feeble and lowly person, trampled under tyranny, into a perfect human being, who was a Brahmin by virtue of his spiritual deeds and Kshatriya by his deeds of valour. This perfect man (Khalsa) is capable of making the latest experiments and becoming a competent scientist, doctor, professor, general and an able ruler and administrator. He is a Vaish in the sense that he does honest labour and even after having attained the highest position of a knowledgeable sadhu (saint), he is everready to do the meanest service like dusting shoes, waving fan, offering water, spreading durees (carpets), serving the unknown patients in the hospital, cooking food in the common kitchen, serving food and cleaning utensils. Performing all these services, the Gursikh ascetic (Khalsa) gets engrossed in ecstasy resulting from self-realization and attains to that lofty state where he appears to be an embodiment of God Himself.

*“The true Khalsa is one who experiences
the ecstasy of self-realization.*

There is no difference between God, I and him.”

(Sarb Loh Granth)

Such a great miracle as that of one man in the form of the Khalsa performing various deeds and attaining to the high position of 'Satguru' (True Preceptor) while going about in the world, had not been wrought before the creation of the Khalsa ideal. This great wonder was performed by the Tenth Guru by infusing a new life into the dead. It was highly amazing that the individual soul that is obliged to go through the tortuous cycle of 84 lakh lives like insect, moth, elephant, fish, bird, tree etc; should be

transformed into God's image, and this miracle could be performed only by Guru Gobind Singh Ji who was the son of the Timeless One (God). Only the Tenth Guru could make those who had attained to the position of the Khalsa sit and abide in the lap of *Sri Asket* (God) and make them recipients of the blessings of the '*Sarb Loh*' (Almighty God). Baisakhi is a momentous day in the history of the world. So far the world has not been able to comprehend the Khalsa ideal fully and how lofty and noble it is. It is as yet unknown to the world how this perfect man conducts himself and how he views the world. The Khalsa is absolutely free from enmity, malice and jealousy. He considers the entire world his own. When in the manifest form, Bhai Ghanaiya offered water to the wounded in the battle-field without any discrimination between friend and foe, none was able to understand his action. But in whosoever's throat went down few draughts of water with the touch of Bhai Ghanaiya's hands, was rid of his inner darkness, and with enlightened eyes he saw one Waheguru (God) in all beings. When the Tenth Guru asked him: "Whom do you offer water to drink?" he replied: "My master! I do not see any Turk or non-Turk, Hindu or non-Hindu, known or unknown, friend or foe, good or bad, persecutor or the persecuted. I see only your image manifest in all human beings." Guru Sahib was pleased with that perfect man, and giving him ointment and bandages said: "Bhai Ghanaiya! You have attained to the position of the Khalsa. In future, if need be, you should apply ointment on my wounds, dress them and offer me water to drink. To manifest this great ideal of service, I left my state of total meditation of and merger with God and appeared in the human form. It is my duty to remove folly and ignorance, and spread the light of reason. It is the bounden duty of the Khalsa to pray for universal welfare. I have not made the Khalsa a feigning impersonator. By making a true man see his true image, I have rid him of all shackles and fashioned him into the image of Waheguru (God), who engages himself in the noble task of Divine Name recitation.

Therefore, dear readers, think over that lofty ideal, the perfect miracle wrought by the Tenth Guru. This great ideal shall

continue to prosper for ages, and as time passes, it shall shine in greater purity and glory. The whole world shall long to emulate it, because it is the perfect ideal in this otherwise illusory world. The Khalsa has attained full knowledge. He has mastered material riches, dispersed the darkness of ignorance and spread light everywhere in the world.

Facing numerous odds, this ideal has continued to advance and prosper. If we consciously project this ideal on the stage of the world, the world is bound to adopt it and accept it. Our preachers are caught up in such a situation that I do not wish to make any comments. May the Guru grant them good sense, and make our religious functionaries realise their duty and attain to this sublime loftiness and enjoy the bliss of being Khalsa ! Then they should present it on the world's stage and propagate it everywhere. The Khalsa ideal can bestow all joys and comforts on its votaries. All spiritual and occult powers are at the Khalsa's feet. Even the gods seek the dust of his feet and are looking for it:

"The great god, Shiva, searches for the Brahmgyani (the man who knows God). Nanak, the Brahmgyani, is Himself the Exalted Lord."

(Sri Guru Granth Sahib, P. 273)

My dear! comprehend this ideal, don't try to confine it in the strait-jacket of traditional practices. It is a symbol of universal life. Try to propagate it in all countries and languages. By just becoming a Khalsa yourself does not do much good. If a man of low and depraved character uses the word 'Khalsa' with his name, it gets polluted. Avoid these failings and propagate the great ideals enshrined in Sri Guru Granth Sahib all over the world, and with this humble request I conclude my discourse.



We take pleasure in printing here an English rendering of Sant Inder Singh Chakravarti's *Khalsey Di Vaar*" [A Ballad of the Khalsa] for which we are extremely grateful to him.

A Ballad of the Khalsa

*At Anandpur did the Tenth Guru manifest all his glory ;
Established he his throne there to preach truth wholly.
This frightened Aurangzeb very terribly.
So sent he a messenger to find out the facts verily.
He saw with his own eyes
a wondrous scene;
So sent he a report of what he had seen.
"I saw Guru Gobind Singh perform a great miracle;
All Panth he had invited to this Baisakhi festival.
Tents did he pitch at Keshgarh and set up his court;
Mammoth crowds did congregate in the Tenth Master's
court.
Held he his sword in his blessed hand;
It shone like lightning on the land.
From a high podium, he raised a loud roar;
Sacrifice do I need to worship the goddess of war.
Is there any soldier who loves to die?
His head should I remove then in a single try.
Such a sacrificing Sikh should come before me.
Task is really difficult, think he should fully;
So that he may not wilt when death comes to him.
Then shall I make him experience death's taste grim.
The court at this fearful command silent became;
Then resolutely got up Daya Ram to meet the Guru's
demand.
Good fortune, my Master! If noble task thine
Is served well by sacrificing poor head mine.
In full view of the gathering, removed he his head ;
Streamed on the land his blood as his torso bled.*

*Hearing the Guru repeat his sentence,
Many poor cowards did run away hence.
Then a second one did stand up who was virtuous
highly;
Let me join, my Master, the company holy.
Held he him raising his victory cry;
The same deed he with him did try.
Third time did Guru Ji raise demand the same;
Stood up another Beloved One, Himmat by name.
Then fourth Beloved One joined them, by name Mohkam;
Everything was righted when the fifth 'Sahib' (Master)
did come.
Thus one by one five warriors emerged at the Master's
call;
He performed a great deed by beheading them all.
Then he placed the heads on torsos and sprinkled nectar;
All of them did get up uttering 'Creator'.
The Guru wrought a great miracle by first beheading and
then joining body and head;
Whether the body and the head were of the same person,
not he decided.
Joined torsos with the heads he, without much thought,
Like gardner does the grafting with the branches
brought.
Thus made he the same heart beat in the Panth in a
single try mere;*

*Then the Guru raised his thunderous voice,
which thousands did hear.*

*Of Moghul rule, he promised, to rid the nation;
This miracle did he perform for India's
liberation.*

*The Hill rulers trembled on hearing the drums
of war;*

“Do whatever you can, that's in thy power.”

Mastered has he victory with meditation high;

*A pure Panth has he created, of war who does
not shy.*

*He administered 'amrit' (nectar) and made life
worth-while;*

*All glory to Gobind Singh, both Guru and
disciple.*

All glory to Gobind